Community Forest Agreement Program

Annual Report 2001-2002

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Ministry of Forests

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For more information on the Community Forest Agreement Program, including contact information for all agreement holders, visit the website:

www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/community/

Cover Photos, from top: Aerial view of the Bamfield Huu-ay-aht community forest, First tree harvested from the Esketemc community forest, Tree frog and culturally modified tree in the Bamfield community forest.

INTRODUCTION

What is a Community Forest Pilot Agreement?

In 1998, the province amended the *Forest Act* to create Community Forest Agreements, a new form of tenure designed to allow more communities and First Nations to participate directly in the management of local forests.

In order to test the effectiveness of this new form of forest tenure, the Ministry of Forests launched a pilot project in which it issued a special form of the tenure, called a community forest pilot agreement (CFPA). The pilot agreements are limited to a term of five years, during which the tenure is evaluated. Those holders who successfully operate the pilot agreements may be offered a long-term community forest agreement, with terms of 25-99 years.

To date, five agreements have been issued to a range of communities and First Nations, and several more agreements are pending. These issued pilot agreements are located throughout the province, and currently range in size from about 400 hectares to more than 25,000 hectares. Each agreement is unique, and reflects the priorities outlined in each organization's proposal for the agreement.

Like all forest tenures, these community forests are bound by a legal agreement between the Forest Service and the agreement holder. This agreement grants the community specific rights to use public forest land and harvest timber in exchange for meeting certain forest stewardship obligations and the payment of stumpage and annual rent.

Timeline

1997

December 1997: Community Forest Advisory Committee appointed

1998

Summer 1998: Legislation passed creating Community Forest Pilot Agreement

September 1998: Request for Proposals for pilot agreements issued

1999

Summer 1999: Seven communities offered agreements

2000

October 2000: Three additional communities offered agreements

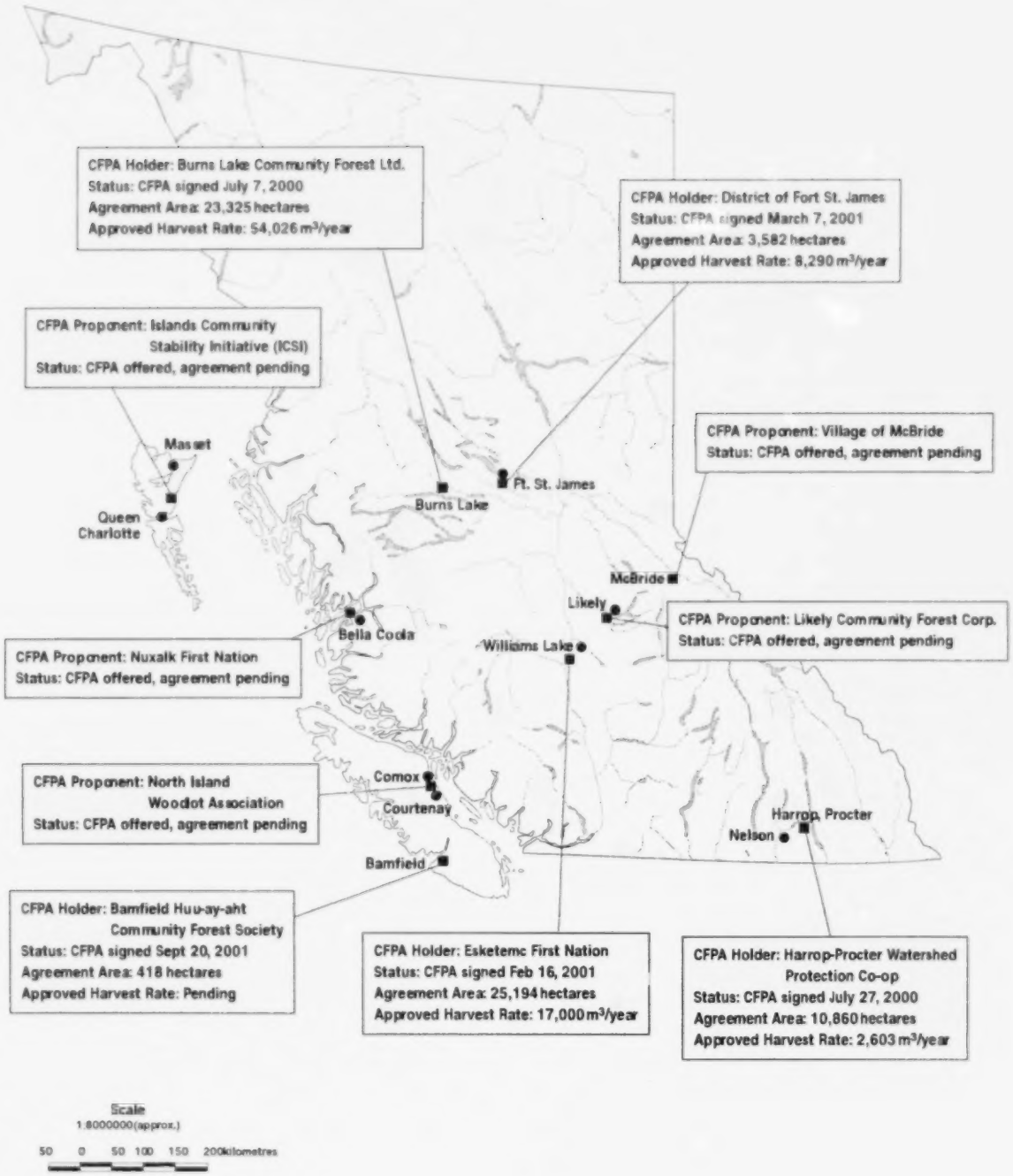
2001

Program Objectives

By providing communities with opportunities to manage local forests, government seeks to test whether the following objectives can be met:

- provide long-term opportunities for achieving a range of community objectives, including employment, forest-related education and skills training, and other social, environmental and economic benefits;
- balance uses of forest resources;
- meet the objectives of government with respect to environmental stewardship including the management of timber, water, fisheries, wildlife and cultural heritage resources;
- enhance the use of and benefits derived from the community forest agreement area;
- encourage co-operation among stakeholders; and
- provide social and economic benefits to British Columbia.

Community Forest Pilot Agreements


CFPA Holder: Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.
Status: CFPA signed July 7, 2000
Agreement Area: 23,325 hectares
Approved Harvest Rate: 54,026 m³/year
CFPA Holder: District of Fort St. James
Status: CFPA signed March 7, 2001
Agreement Area: 3,582 hectares
Approved Harvest Rate: 8,290 m³/year
CFPA Proponent: Islands Community Stability Initiative (ICSI)
Status: CFPA offered, agreement pending
CFPA Proponent: Village of McBride
Status: CFPA offered, agreement pending
Masset
Queen Charlotte
Burns Lake
Ft. St. James
McBride
Likely
CFPA Proponent: Likely Community Forest Corp.
Status: CFPA offered, agreement pending
Bella Coola
Williams Lake
CFPA Proponent: Nuxalk First Nation
Status: CFPA offered, agreement pending
CFPA Proponent: North Island Woodlot Association
Status: CFPA offered, agreement pending
Comox
Courtenay
Harrop, Procter
Nelson
Bamfield
CFPA Holder: Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society
Status: CFPA signed Sept 20, 2001
Agreement Area: 418 hectares
Approved Harvest Rate: Pending
CFPA Holder: Esketemc First Nation
Status: CFPA signed Feb 16, 2001
Agreement Area: 25,194 hectares
Approved Harvest Rate: 17,000 m³/year
CFPA Holder: Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Co-op
Status: CFPA signed July 27, 2000
Agreement Area: 10,860 hectares
Approved Harvest Rate: 2,603 m³/year
Scale
1:8000000 (approx.)
50 0 50 100 150 200 kilometres

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

The community forest pilots continued to evolve during 2001-2002. In a few cases, community forest pilot agreements have become fully established and operational, and have shown measured success. In other cases, however, progress has been slow.

In 2001-2002, the forest sector in B.C. suffered a downturn, and when combined with the softwood lumber dispute with the United States, may have affected business planning in some pilots. At the same time, new agreement holders had to grapple with the technical complexities required to develop a management plan, a Forest Development Plan and other plans needed to become operational. This is doubly difficult if a licence holder is relying on volunteers or has lost key contributors, as happens when Band councils or management boards change. These factors underscore the importance of a community being fully prepared and committed to the concept of a community forest in order for that community forest to be successful.

These experiences are valuable as we explore this new form of forest tenure. As many communities have not held any kind of forest tenure before getting a pilot agreement, much learning must take place. It is only natural to expect that groups that have not held any form of forest tenure in the past might be slow in becoming established or operational.

The Community Forest Advisory Committee will continue to monitor this important program and to make recommendations to government about the successful implementation of pilot agreements. We also applaud the formation of the B.C. Community Forest Association, at the Community Forest Forum held in Victoria March 14-16, 2002. We hope that this association provides a valuable service to community forest operators in the province.

Submitted by G. S. Battersby
Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee

Community Forest Advisory Committee
Geoff Battersby (President)
Cameron Beck
David Haley
R.M. (Rick) Jeffery
Ralph Moore
Doug Routledge
Earl Smith
Keith Spencer
Chris Tollefson

* The CFAC was established to guide the development of the CF legislation and policy. During the operational phase, the role of the Community Forest Advisory Committee is to make recommendations on acts, regulations and policy; participate in the monitoring of pilots; and facilitate information flow between communities and government.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS APRIL 1, 2001 - MARCH 31, 2002

Agreement Signed

On September 20, 2001, the Ministry of Forests formally entered into a Community Forest Pilot Agreement with the Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society, which operates the Bamfield/Huu-ay-aht community forest. This small community forest has a land base of 418 hectares of Crown land adjacent to the communities of Bamfield and Anacla, home of the Huu-ay-aht First Nation. In addition to timber production, the society plans to use the community forest area to develop recreation and education opportunities. A management plan for the community forest is being developed; the annual harvest rate will be developed concurrent with that plan.

Woodlot Licence Forest Management Regulation Amended

Community Forest Pilot Agreements are administered under the Community Forest Agreement Regulation and with a few exceptions, requires all licensees to comply with the Woodlot Licence Forest Management Regulation. In February 2002, changes to the Woodlot Licence Forest Management Regulation came into effect. These changes include exemptions and special provisions to expedite harvesting timber infested with bark beetles or damaged by wind. As well, new environmental protection requirements for the construction of access trails were introduced.

New Invitations Issued

Three new invitations to apply for a pilot agreement were made during 2001-2002. The Cowichan Tribes and the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council were directly invited to apply for community forest pilot agreements and an open invitation to apply was issued in the Lakes Forest District.

Monitoring of Pilot Agreements

In July 2001, the Community Forest Advisory Committee met with Ministry of Forests staff to discuss, among other topics, the monitoring and evaluation of pilot agreements. The advisory committee recommended that the following categories form the basis for monitoring agreements:

- Economic return to the Province
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Forest practices, environmental standards and agreement compliance
- Innovation
- Management across all resources
- Economic diversity and stability
- Incremental use of the landbase

The monitoring format for pilot agreements will be further refined over the coming year.

Priorities for the 2002-2003 fiscal year

The following are priorities for the community forest pilot program:

- Further develop a monitoring system for measuring the success of individual pilots and the overall success of the tenure.
- Continue to finalize agreements with the communities that have been offered a pilot agreement.
- Create new opportunities for pilot agreements as directed by government.
- Revise, as needed, legislation and administration to better meet the needs of pilot agreement holders and the goals of government.

Status of CPAs

Community	Date of CPFA offer	Date CPFA Issued	Date Mgmt Plan Appvd	Area (ha)	AAC (M^3/yr)	Total Timber Harvest All Years (M^3)
Issued Agreements						
Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society	99 06 09	01 09 20		418		
Burns Lake Community Forest Corp.	99 06 09	00 07 07	00 09 04	23,325	53,677	66,500
Esketemc First Nation	99 06 09	01 02 16	01 08 16	25,000	17,000	18,357
Dist. of Fort St. James	99 06 09	01 03 07	01 10 31	3,582	8,290	
Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Coop	99 07 06	00 07 27	01 02 14	10,860	2,603	1,900
Pending Agreements:						
North Island Woodlot Corp.	99 07 05					
Island Community Stability Initiative	99 07 06					
Likely Community Forest Corp.	00 10 24					
Nuxalk First Nation	00 10 24					
Village of McBride	00 10 24					
Totals				63,185	81,570	86,757

REPORTS FROM PILOT HOLDERS

Fort St. James Community Forest

The Fort St. James Community Forest has continued to conduct planning activities to prepare for active operations. However, due to the outbreak of bark beetles in operating areas adjacent to the agreement area and other areas within the district, the licensee has decided to defer harvesting until forest health conditions in the community forest make it necessary.

The community forest has continued to actively monitor beetle outbreaks and has conducted small-scale remediation measures as necessary. Because planning, consultations and referrals are ongoing, the tenure holder will be prepared to conduct operations to control beetle infestations as soon as it is necessary for control and sanitation purposes. Access to the agreement area via roads in adjacent operating areas will greatly facilitate beetle control, consequently, ongoing communication with other licensees will be maintained.

Milestones:

- Agreement signed in June 2001.
- Management plan approved October 31, 2001.
- Preparation of five-year Forest Development Plan by Ecofor Consultants.
- Aerial photographs for 1995 and 1997 purchased, and preliminary maps on age class thematics and access on file. A preliminary assessment of aquatic ecosystems was completed (Environmental Dynamics).
- Trail clearing and brushing maintenance completed August 2001 on the Stuart Lake-Fraser Lake Historic Trail.

Submitted by Peter Robinson, Fort St. James Community Forest

Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.

The year 2001 was another year of chasing bark beetles. During January and February, we were able to complete approximately 60 per cent of our beetle management goals through harvesting. It became apparent, however, that the current Allowable Annual Cut of 23,677 m^3 per year would not permit the Burns Lake Community Forest to harvest all the beetle-infested trees in a given year. The company applied for and received a "beetle harvest only" AAC uplift to 54,000 m^3, of which 10 per cent is dedicated to slopes greater than 35 per cent.

Overflights to identify new beetle infestations were completed, and harvesting layout began in September. Harvesting (right of ways) commenced in July, but markets were soft and deliveries were curtailed from July to December.

Despite the slowdown in harvesting, the summer was busy. We received partial funding from the Province for an "Environmental Team" comprising one supervisor and five students. They upgraded and maintained the Opal Beds recreation site and trails, the Guyishton Trail system, the Bear Dens trails system and the Star Lake trail.

The team also had time to construct approximately nine kilometres of new trail around Kager and Long lakes, and assisted with the Loch Lomond interpretive trail system. The vehicle and equipment used in these projects were paid for by the company and are now available for future projects.

The company also applied for and received partial funding for a "First Jobs In Science and Technology" position. The successful applicant assisted in probing harvesting layout and various other forestry functions until December.

From a company perspective, perhaps the biggest news of 2001 was our board's decision to purchase the former Ager Medical Clinic. The building has provided us with an accessible and comfortable new office, and allowed us to provide office space to other community groups and organizations for a nominal fee.

Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd., along with every tenure holder in the Lakes Timber Supply Area, is forced to continually adapt to meet the challenges of bark beetle management. Faced with low market prices, proposed forest policy changes, and the uncertainty surrounding Canada's dispute with the U.S. over softwood lumber, our community-owned forest corporation has adopted a "wait and see" approach for the summer of 2002. The field work necessary to identify beetle infestation and potential harvesting areas will continue, however.

Despite the issues mentioned above, Burns Lake not only survived another year but also bettered its financial position. Unfortunately, the economic challenges associated with low quality beetle infested timber and depressed log market prices prevented the community forest corporation from achieving many of the "extra" objectives identified in the original community forest proposal.

Submitted by Ken Guenter, General Manager, Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.

Harrop-Procter Community Forest

Forest Management

It was a challenging year in the Harrop-Procter Community Forest with accomplishments ranging from harvesting trees and non-timber forest products to production of value-added lumber and botanical products. Logging operations started in August. After road upgrades were complete, harvesting began in the first cutblock, an 80 hectare partial cut, with a target 35 per cent volume removal. By the end of the year 1,900 m^3 was harvested (hand falling and cable yarded), primarily Douglas fir, western larch, western red cedar and lodgepole pine. Most logs were shipped to area mills, however, nearly 200 m^3 was retained by Harrop-Procter Forest Products (HPFP) for local value added production.

Product Development

A strategy was developed early in the year that evaluated several short- and long-term value added options that compared costs and revenue generated by selling logs only, milling and selling various wood products, and establishing a value added manufacturing facility in the community. This project provided guidance to value added goals set by HPFP for 2001, which in addition to earning revenue, included gaining experience in milling, remanufacturing and product pricing, as well as determining recovery and production rates for different species and products. HPFP sold 22,000 board feet of value added products, including cedar decking and siding, and Douglas fir and larch dimensional lumber. Specialty products included curved Douglas fir logs that were milled and sold to a local timber framer. The HPFP developed a marketing campaign promoting "wood with a conscience," which was successful in attracting potential customers in B.C. and the United States. HPFP is also exploring possible products that can be manufactured by local woodworkers.

The Harrop-Procter Community Cooperative (HPCC) is committed to achieving Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification during the pilot project. The pre-assessment was completed in 2001 and the main assessment is scheduled to occur during July 2002.

Non-timber Forest Products and Botanicals

Sunshine Bay Botanicals is a member of the HPCC and primarily involved in the agroforestry industry where herbs are grown on and collected from private land. This business venture is slowly expanding to include ingredients collected from the community forest land base. The intention is to develop this area only as sustainability information becomes available. Research continues on sustainable harvesting of three target species, prince's pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*), devil's club (*Oplopanax horridus*) and sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*). Products include tinctures, teas and aromatic oils.

Continued

Monitoring and Research

Water monitoring continued for a third year on three creeks in the community forest. Also, pre-harvest data was collected for permanent plots in the harvest area that will assess over time changes to the forest structures resulting from harvesting. Fallen and standing wood, herb/shrub composition, overstorey and advanced regeneration response to partial cutting are being assessed in 45 permanent plots. In addition, pre-harvest photos were taken at each cruise plot. Wildlife projects included fish, bat and ungulate inventories, as well as grizzly bear and caribou habitat studies.

Community Outreach

Community outreach included four public meetings, three newsletters, numerous field trips (including 15 community members participating in harvest tree marking), letters sent to water users prior to operations, and several meetings with First Nations. Eighty community members attended a Forest Development Plan open house and presentations by terrain and hydrology experts. In the fall, a "wildlife night" was held, where results from various wildlife studies were presented to the community. In addition, the grand re-opening of the Mill Lake Trail was held in October. Also, a community survey was completed to determine what recreation activities are currently occurring in the community forest, and to gain an indication of how the community would like to see recreation develop.

A water user committee participated in site plan development. The committee attended field trips to look at examples of partial cutting elsewhere in the district and in the cutblock to inform discussions on harvest options and requirements for further assessments.

In response to community concerns, a wildlife and field-based terrain stability assessment of the cutblock were completed, although not required by legislation. A biologist field reviewed the block for two days, noting location of active nest trees and valuable snags. To protect breeding birds, harvesting was delayed until after July 1. A water user participated in the terrain assessment, which evaluated risks associated with harvesting in domestic watersheds located in the cutblock.

Employment

Approximately 9.3 person years of employment were generated by the various community forest organizations in 2001. This total includes forest planning staff, consultants, loggers, truckers, road crews, administrators, product marketers, local mills, and farm workers. Two Environmental Youth Teams, employing 11 youth, completed projects including trail maintenance, brushing knapweed, and farm activities for Sunshine Bay Botanicals. Although some of the activities were not directly forest related, none of the employment opportunities would have existed without the community forest.

Submitted by Heather Pinnell, Forest Manager, Harrop-Procter Community Cooperative

Bamfield/Huu-ay-aht Community Forest

After two and a half years of volunteer effort, the Bamfield-Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Pilot Agreement signed a formal Tenure Agreement in September 2001. The signing was held at the House of Huu-ay-aht and attended by several representatives from the Ministry of Forests, Bamfield community and Huu-ay-aht First Nation.

During 2001, a business potential assessment was completed with funding from Forest Renewal B.C. Research began through interviews that identified appropriate business opportunities. These ideas were then explored in the report. The residents' interests leaned strongly towards promoting recreation, tourism, non-timber forest products, selective harvesting, value added manufacturing, education and research within the community forest. The forest was also seen as a greenbelt between Tree Farm Licence 44 (Weyerhaeuser) and the community of Bamfield.

The results of the assessment illustrated that a select few business options are optimally feasible within the community forest. Trails for local and tourist use are a priority, as is local use of wood. For this to occur, some additional local capacity is required. Funding is currently being pursued to determine local capacity as well as to identify outside markets. It is important, given the small volume we can produce, to clearly understand the volume local entrepreneurs can process and what would be available for sale outside the communities.

Student research projects focused on an ongoing inventory of volume, coarse woody debris and vegetation. The School for Field Studies completed an inventory of the entire 430 hectares of agreement land, which will allow a more accurate AAC determination and assist in appropriate trail locations.

In 2001 funding was obtained from the Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers that allowed us to set up an office and hire an executive director and assistant. The staff are tasked with administering all day-to-day operations, as well as fundraising, membership and volunteer coordination. The executive director will write the Management Plan that will set the AAC (tentatively set between 1,000 and 1,500 m^3). This will be completed by July 2002 and will be followed by a Forest Development Plan. Some harvesting may occur in 2002 through the development of a road across the Community Forest to an adjacent Native Reserve (Keeshan). The road allowance will provide some timber and also allow access to at least one small block (0.2 – 0.4 hectares). In all harvesting, our goal is to maintain the structural and functional character of the forest ecologically and visually. Forest Stewardship Council certification is an option being considered for future operations.

Continued

A student intern (a former School for Field Studies student) is identifying old trails for brushing and additions. Trails will highlight ecological, historical and cultural resources, including culturally modified trees that are found throughout the community forest. A canopy platform is envisioned to allow research and to serve as a revenue source.

In March 2001, members of the community forest society attended and made presentations at the Community Forest Forum in Victoria and hosted a post-forum field trip, attended by over 20 people. The participants were given a tour by boat and land of the community forest as well as the Huu-ay-aht community of Anacla, including the workshop of a renowned local carver. Despite the sudden snowstorm, the tour was a great success.

Submitted by Dennis Morgan, Executive Director

Esketemc First Nation Community Forest

After months of negotiating boundary lines with local licensees, ranches and other interested parties, preliminary boundaries were set. Once this was completed, two open-house sessions were held: one at the Esketemc First Nation Reserve, and the second in Williams Lake.

Following approval of the public input sessions, negotiation of the agreement began. During the discussions, more changes were made to the boundaries. The final land area includes Esketemc First Nation Indian Reserve Lands and Crown land, which includes claim lands currently being discussed.

Vision Statement

The Esketemc First Nation considers the Community Forest a key economic driver for their community. It is an opportunity to increase community economic and social stability. The economic contribution will come through forestry jobs in planning, managing, harvesting, reforesting, and manufacturing products from the community forest. These functions will assist members in using their traditional relationship with the land, and to demonstrate their interest in the land base for furthering cultural and heritage values.

Mission Statement

The Esketemc First Nation will achieve its vision for the community forest by working with all stakeholders in their community.

Goals and Planning

The Esketemc First Nation has the following goals for the community forest.

Goals	Progress during 2001-2002
Develop an ecosystem based long-term plan	First Management Plan approved August 2001.
Incorporate Mule Deer Winter Range and Old Growth Management Area strategies into the Forest Development Plan	Held meetings with Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.
Financial independence	Generated a cash flow beginning November 2001.
Provide employment for the community through forestry activities	Provided 20 person months of logging, 10 person months of trucking, and 5 person-months of silviculture and inventory work. 95 per cent of the work was done by First Nations and 80 per cent were Esketemc First Nation.
Provide education and training	Eduction on forest inventory and forest planning. Courses provided on Global Positioning System for 20 people.
Manufacture and sell timber products	Registration of company, Esketemc First Nation Forest Products Ltd. Business plan drafted.
Improve habitat, growth and yield	Spaced 15.7 ha on Joe's Lake Road and surveyed the entire agreement area for future opportunities. Identified 100 ha that meets criteria for funding through Forest Investment Account.
Maintain key partnerships like Ecolink	Ecolink logged 15,000 m^3 November 2001 to January 2002.
Work with key stakeholders, like the ranchers and tourism operators	Met with ranchers and other stakeholders in establishing the community forest boundaries.
Contribute to the local and provincial economy	Paid wages, bought supplies, and paid stumpage ($250,000).
Monitor forest health issues	Aerial reconnaissance completed in October 2001.
Form a company to manage community forest business affairs	Esketemc First Nation Forest Products Ltd. was established in October 2001.
Non-commercial harvest of botanical forest products (wild craft)	Done as a traditional use (not formally monitored).

Submitted by Fred Robbins, Councillor